King of Diamonds

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King of Diamonds

by AskAStupidQuestion

Summary

Will is still in law enforcement, just not the FBI. Hannibal is still a criminal, just not as alone.

Will Graham was promoted to double 0 status two months ago, the newest on the team and the one with most to prove. He’s ordered into action, with immediate effect, under the fake identity Matthew Brown, where Q branch pulled in intel of an agreement between various European mafia dons that could have serious consequences for peace in Europe, and the rest of the world while they’re at it. Crime is a globalised business.

Notes

A HUGE thanks to all Petrichor24 has done in editing (I have no idea how you stand my grammatical abuse). The first few chapters I wrote a WHILE back, so I'm sorry for any inconsistency in style but it has been thoroughly edited so fingers crossed it's all good!!

Enjoy!

The Mission

Start Date: 09/08/17

Mission: Gather intel of the conference and subsequent dealings between crime units. Take action where necessary.

Stop a conclusion from being reached. Keep them from forming alliances and, if possible, turn them against one another without putting yourself in the firing line.

Requirements: Under no circumstances reveal your true identity. Keep body count to a minimum to avoid detection. There is no one determined date for this agreement yet but to minimise risk finish the job by December.

Note(s): Meet in Room 107 for briefing, your new identity will be given to you there.

Try not to die on the first job – M.

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He's a replacement. He knew that from the very start. The old agent had buggered off to god knows where or perhaps was lying in a ditch somewhere in The Bahamas. Either way MI6 no longer cared, had a team of recruits creaming themselves for the chance to rise through the ranks, practically salivating at the thought.

Will Graham had beat them all.

And now he had the chance to prove his spot. Other agents had already been deployed on similar missions, infiltrating into various loopholes under guises to try and secure them a spot at the final table. The whole plan had been started months ago, some agents being planted as far back as five years. MI6 never missed the chance when it came to the long-con.

With the Western European bases covered and only a little help from Interpol, Will was advancing into the east territory. Only two days from now he'd be deployed deep into the Baltics, alone. He felt a cold chill wash over him at the thought.

"Your tracker will give us a precise location as to where you are, down to the nearest meter," Zeller carefully explained to him, "please don't try and cut it out, it didn't end well last time."

Will was curious as to who would try but held his tongue.

“It’ll swell for half or day or so but should ultimately be fine. I’ve inserted it into the back of your neck underneath an artery so please be careful for the time being. As for your personal tech, Price has got some bits and bobs you might want to take a look at.”

He nodded, “thanks.”

After Price had assigned him a handgun and silencer he was almost on his way.

“Where do you think you’re going?” The Q-branch technician snorted, “This is the most important piece you’ll need.”

Will raised an eyebrow.

In an outstretched hand Price held a tiny rectangle, the same flat grey the walls were painted in. He turned it over to show Will the two small circles embedded into it.

“The first one is your panic button. If you’re about to be discovered or you’re out of your depth press it. We’ll have someone there within 24 hours, you just have to make it till then.”

“And that one?” Will asked, gesturing to the larger of the two.

“Press it once the mission’s complete. It’ll be the only way to notify us since we’re hoping you’re not going to end up on national news strung up dead on the top of the Eiffel tower.” He delivered flatly and smiled disconcertingly wide.

“Good luck Matthew Brown.”

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That was six months ago.

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Finally some face to face action!

He is kissed awake with coffee on his lips. Will begins to groan- morning is too early when it's before 2pm, and tries to grab the feathered duvet over his head but his wrists are encircled by two large hands before he can snuggle back under to darkness. The streaming light is beginning to annoy him. They should really get better curtains (you would think they could afford it).

"Good morning, *mylimasis*." Came a voice rough with morning disuse.

He makes a vague noise of discontent back that's followed by a short huffed laugh from the figure sitting beside him.

"9 o'clock, my meeting is in half an hour but I have business to tend to before then."

"Should I be worried?"

"Not unless you're the one trying to undercut my prices."

His skin crawls unconsciously. They've been getting ever closer to the elusive idiot who decided that challenging the undercover arms black market was a good idea. He knows what they do to the 'clues' they find, knows how those people end up. It was only two months ago he was doing those things himself. The morning is not the time to stomach such things.

He snorts anyway, a harsh derivative sound as if he couldn't care less. It made the corner of the man's mouth twist upwards.

"I'm the one trying to get a wink of decent sleep."

As if he ever could in this place. As if he felt safe enough with what surrounded him.

"I'll leave you to it, breakfast is on the table when you want it," the smell of bacon and fresh orange juice had now started appearing some time anywhere between eight and noon, "but I expect you ready by eleven, don't be late."

"Where this time?"

"Milan, we're meeting some friends of mine."

Will raised a pointed eyebrow. Friends doesn't mean friends. Friends means business associate, ally, financer, someone who can betray you when they see fit. Friends for now, but never forever, not in this business or his own.

"I'll be ready," he nodded obediently.

"I know," and all at once Will feels caged in. He's been living safely under the watchful eye of this particular crime family for four months and only more recently 'promoted' to the bed he now lay in, yet he's never felt this trapped. Under his mission, under this persona, under even this damn duvet he is never his own man. He belonged to someone else now. Will was never sure whether that was to MI6 or the arms dealers. "I will see you then, Matthew." He hated his fake name with a passionate rage. As if he needed another reminder of his damn situation.

"Until then."

The man, dressed sharply as ever in a charcoal grey three-piece and oxblood tie, got to his feet. He lingers at the side of the bed for a moment longer, taking in the sight of Will below him; his hair a mess of waves, his limbs sprawled slovenly in the king-sized bed, looking for all the world at home in his place. He could sense the vague satisfaction of ownership wash over the man but denied himself the pleasure of rolling his eyes, or better yet slapping that chiseled face. He only had to wait a few more days. But then, once he could, oh how his mind bubbled with imaginative outcomes. He thought it would've been faster pace than this, more action and adventure not…

this.

Subtly and paperwork. His favourite. That was his life now, managing some low level accounts of the franchise and some shitty side dealings with Russian drug runners no one cared about. Woo. So this is the glamorous life of a spy, spending half your life working against your country and the other being someone's puppet. Being head of the mob didn't sound such a bad idea once you realise you can work for your own cause.

A knock on the heavy wooden door interrupts his thoughts.

"Yes?" Curt and precise.

"Our man wants to talk."

"As they all do," a brief smile flickers on his face.

Will hates how cruel it is, just waiting to elicit pain in his victims and worse how he sees the man's eyes twinkle at the thought. They say killers have no light in their eyes. just pure darkness. That's why Will distrusts this one so much; too composed, too normal that it's abnormal for the devil incarnate. The man's smile is one of the most prominent reminders of why he Will started this job in the first place.

“He requests it be only to you.”

“Does he think himself in a position to make requests then?” His voice is level but Will can detect a slight playfulness in it after becoming so finely tuned to him. The foot soldier stutters out a quick reply that amuses him further. Will always pities the new ones, knowing how he felt himself, overwhelmed and utterly lost trying to navigate orders perfectly for fear of punishment.

“Wait outside.”

The soldier retreats back into the stone corridor obediently.

“Apologies I cannot stay for breakfast my dear although I hope you enjoy it. I made the sausages myself.”

“Thank you, you are too generous,” he smiles through gritted teeth. His captor smiles softly back at him.

He’d take being a street low life over this any day. He lies amongst silk sheets with only boxers allowing him a semblance of modesty. Funny how this had ended up- he was closer to his mission than MI6 could have ever imagined yet having started out on the very edge of this world on a grimy corner in Prague, mistaken for a prostitute and then employed for his other, less explicit talents. It may still be R rated but at least he doesn’t have to sleep with the people he’s ordered to kill. Had the situation been reversed, and he was here of his own will, he might actually enjoy it.

His forehead is brushed with the quick press of lips.

“Eleven.”

“Eleven,” Will confirms with a brisk nod of his head.

The man strides out of the room elegantly as ever. He’s agile even at this peculiar age for a criminal. He can hear their solid footsteps echo down the corridor.

“After you.”

“Yes Dr Lecter.”

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

> Some hints at Hannibal/Will (or Hannibal/Matthew if you look at it that way) past experiences together sprinkled with a touch of hurt comfort

Airports all look the same to him now. In the past few months he's been flown all over the world (Hawaii was his favourite) although mostly to the European capitals where it was an endless stream of tourists and businessmen in varying ratios. Dr Lecter has always booked the exact same 15A seat in economy class of a jet plane for every one of those and the monotony is beginning to become tedious. But hey, the window seat is a plus (even if his legs seem to never quite be comfortable enough).

This time he's accompanied by Lecter himself and a small security detail with the same armed force as the entire of the Queen's guard, smuggling on their pistols using hushed bribes. He had the privilege of wearing a tailored suit along with Lecter, whilst the others who were dotted around in small groups all over the terminals were in casual dress and, to his delight, a few in low slung jeans, snapbacks and even the odd 'lads on tour' slogan, pretending to be far too young for their real age.

Hannibal, as he insisted Will calls him, refuses to eat airport food that is served anywhere else than the VIP golden lounge, so that's where they remain for up to half an hour before the flight. The staff at any airport will recognise him immediately and offer their finest services, fawning over someone who they only know as one of their most loyal and wealthiest customer. Frankly, all Will wants is a cup of coffee and a seat so he usually ends up loitering around the duty free for a bit longer. Today is one of those days.

He was milling around the magazine aisle trying to kill time for a bit.

"Brown."

There comes a hushed low voice from beside him, startling Will. He glanced to the side, double taking when he realises he recognises the face to go with the voice.

"005- I mean, Bev-"

She silences him with a pointed look of sharpened anger and alarm. They both turn back to the racks of magazines, leafing through a few pages to disguise their talk.

"It's nice to see you."

"It's not for long, there's a message- intel from Paris." He's struggling to keep up with her words, seeing Beverley here in person was enough of a shock considering the last thing he

knew was she was dead in a Russian coal mine. “Stay in the city centre today and keep close to him, at least till it’s over, you’ll know what I mean.”

He looks at her bewildered.

“And if you’re looking for something to amuse yourself, then surely fashion will help the most in Milan,” she nods towards the stack of papers with the latest chic designs on them. Will’s never noticed them before.

“If things go to plan I will see you within a week.”

“And if they don’t?” Will hesitates to ask.

“Maybe we won’t at all. You’re a clever person, Matthew Brown. Stay alive.”

He feels his neck shudder slightly. He doesn’t know if it’s him or Katz that’ll be the worst off, or maybe they’ll both be dead together if this endeavour doesn’t pay off. She’s already taken a great risk to see him. That is, if she’s undercover too. If she’s not, then he’s the one with the most danger to face. He regrets this already.

By the time he has managed to process it all she’s gone, back into the thronging crowd. It’s going to be a long fucking week.

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The next day’s lunch, or as Will sees it, the ‘I’m a criminal and hate cops too’ hang out, takes place at the small yet classy restaurant that sits in a handy nook in a calm courtyard, just outside of the tourist zone. There’s vines growing outwards, covering the top of the lattice wood veranda so that it cast a soothing shade on the customers below.

He watches Lecter from the moulding window of an adjacent house. Gun in hand, he waits.

It’s always when you look away that shit goes wrong so he’s learnt his lesson to keep his focus. He gets into a routine- scans the surrounding buildings, checks rooftops and windows, counts his men and then settles on Lecter again. He repeats this over and over without straying.

He remembers all the times he’s done this before. And all the times it was him doing the opposite- trying to line up a shot, surrounded by opposing men and nestled in a dark corner. It’s rare that they’re together this long, Hannibal usually sends him off again within a week but now it’s been two and he can feel the paranoia building in him. The quick turnaround has been what has allowed him to keep boundaries in place but he can feel their relationship slip ever closer to what Hannibal wanted him for in the first place and the scariest thing is that he can’t find either a reason or a way to stop it without calling the whole mission off.

He remembers the first time they slept together. Not in that way though, never. In a dingy hotel room in Poland surrounded by a city of hired guns and no electricity. Will had returned with a limp and a sleeping bag which he settled on the floor by the single bed. They weren't meant to be here but Lecter's building had been infested with too many of his rivals and they both took the decision to move to where Will was staying.

Alas, it wasn't quite the glamour Hannibal was used to.

Will stumbled through the door frame dragging the bag behind him, arm outstretched to the wall. A black bruise had welded his left eye shut. He managed to lug himself to the bathroom, dropping his load, and turn on the taps of the bath only to be greeted with an ice-cold splash. Still he clambered in, fully clothed and bloody as the water rose around him, his soaked clothes weighing him down. All Will could hope was that it would reduce the swelling.

Hannibal had been in the other room, leafing through a recipe book or perhaps something in French, Will couldn't remember. He rose when he heard the clattering, following the noise to the bathroom where he found Will lying flaccid, face turned to the ceiling and eyes closed.

There's a soft touch of fingers to his cheek and Will winces, sucking in a breath. The palm strokes gently over his bruises and brings a cold rag to soothe them. The water is turned off before Will can suffer any more.

Hannibal is there to wash the blood off his body, slowly scrubbing at any part of his bare skin. It feels rough and unbearable to Will. Like he's hot and cold all at once and his skin is suddenly too tight for his body.

He loses track of time and is eventually pulled out of his icy hell and carried to the bed. It's not soft, not too clean and not nearly comfortable enough but he sinks into it like it's a damn cloud. He can feel Lecter pulling at his trousers, then his jacket, then his shirt. At last he's undressed and not wearing his sodden clothes anymore. Hannibal takes his time, having rifled through their supplies, to disinfect his wounds. They're not as bad as some he's had before but he's thankful for the familiar sting of alcohol swiped across him. He's so damn drowsy but he needs to stay awake on watch.

Hannibal hears his mumbling and dismisses Will's concern immediately. He insists on Will staying where he is and Will gratefully obeys. He doesn't know why he's like this. Hannibal was unforgiving, he was relentless and merciless, not even to his own men. Why of all people, had Will deserved this treatment? He's not second in command, not special nor unique, yet he'd never even heard of Lecter behaving like this with anyone.

He knows he's good at his 'job' and for some reason now feels compelled to at least keep up his track record. He has come out battered, bruised, scarred and with a few more holes than he came in with. But with him Lecter has never ever got shot. Ever. And that's a streak he's dedicated himself to and he feels almost-

A thunderous boom sounds.

A bomb has gone off.

There's shouts from the courtyard below as ordinary citizens yelp in shock and confusion. He stays in position just long enough to see the ground team escort Hannibal under cover and makes a break for it. There's a loud buzz of talk in his ear piece that fills his head with noise as he climbs up the wrought iron staircase. There's no need for him to run just yet but the people on the ground scatter and dart like beetles.

"Do you have the Stag, team Alpha? I repeat is the Stag secure?" He speaks evenly into his mic and waits. He makes it onto the roof before he gets a reply.

"Stag secure, team leader."

He allows himself a brief exhale that Hannibal is safe as he scans the skyline. A plume of smoke rises and coils like a mass of writhing serpents. The bomb was set off to the west about half a mile away, just close enough to arise panic. He starts stalking along the top of the flat roof, keeping pace with where Hannibal is being escorted so that as he walks Will can see his head through any windows he walks past. His expression is neutral. The sort of disconcerting calm before the storm of rage. Hannibal will know someone has given them away and not even Will can tell him who it is. He's curious as to how Beverley knew too but MI6 has its ways, even if he was unaware of another mole in the system or perhaps the entire senior level of another cartel.

There's no one in the street now. And all Will can hear is his fast footsteps and the racket of screams coming from half a mile away.

Until another is set off.

And another.

And another.

He breaks into a run, shouting commands into his microphone and scrambling to keep up with Hannibal who heads down a covered pathway that's blockaded from the street with tall brick arches.

The bombs are getting closer. If he looks behind him he can see three new grey clouds, all in streets that get closer and closer to them, that seem to loom hauntingly above the buildings that have been torn open by them, leaving a trail of destruction like an open wound on the city.

"Car. Now."

“He will be safer in the safe building,” a voice argues back through his earpiece.

“Until that building blows up too of course,” there’s a pause, “I said now.”

The fifth boom comes suddenly and when Will stops to look back he sees the restaurant being rained on with shards of glass and brick from the building he was just standing in.

Fuck.

He sprints, trying to outrun the explosions. They keep going. To his left, on his right, it feels like he’s boxed in a corridor and the walls are getting smaller. He’s three levels high on rickety building with slipping terracotta tiles that seem to falter beneath his feet. If he falls now it’d be certain death.

His feet pound the roofs beneath him.

He runs further, faster, desperate to escape. His breath is catching in his throat. It’s hard to breathe when all that fills his lungs is dust and smoke. He’s briefly away of a fire catching behind him and the heat pushes him onwards. He can feel his shirt soaking with sweat. His arms are aching from sudden movement, his legs screaming with the effort. It feels like his lungs are burning every time his chest expands for a breath.

Surely they’ll stop. There must be a point when they stop. Otherwise his life will stop first.

Then who would protect Hannibal? He shakes.

He can feel cramp building in his limbs but he can’t let it take him yet. It’s not safe. He’s not sure when it’ll ever be. He bolts towards the centre of the city. His panting is loud and heavy. Screw subtlety - this is a fight for survival against an enemy he didn’t even know he had.

Will sees Hannibal flashing in and out of the corners of the street below him, age doing nothing to hamper him, tailed by two guards. He hoped they’d make it, unable to explain the feeling tight inside his chest, perh-

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In the next moment, Will lies on the dirty street floor, bloody.

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

As he runs Hannibal cares only for Matthew's location as he skitters about on the rooftops, slipping tiles from their positions. Normally, he would be on ground level running along beside him as the world shattered around them so that Matthew was simply a subtitle under the heading of Hannibal's safety. But now, separated by a wide paved stone street, they face the reality of one attending the other's funeral alone. He's not certain who will play which part but he vows revenge: be it from life or the grave.

He takes calculated glances towards Brown.

Until the moment he's not there and the shattered world seems to stop moving.

He doesn't see him fall, only his body on the ground. There's no time for shock, only action. He's decisive as he crosses the street without even thinking. The two men that flank him follow but do not object. He kneels at the body and rolls him into his arms so that Matthew's weight is rested firmly against his own chest and cradles his head with his palm. It's stained with red within seconds. His lids are shut, behind them his eyes are still.

The remnants of explosions and the after effects still surround them but with each explosion the next carries on further away so that they've surpassed them now. They're safe for the moment.

Their headquarters are half a mile away. A walk in broad daylight would neither be subtle nor safe but he can't risk going underground if Matthew has open wounds, and given the last ten minutes the roof is not an option. He begins walking.

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He's steeped in darkness and alone for the first time since he began. There's nothing but silence around him. There's a bizarre emptiness when he knows he should at least here the dim buzz of lights, surely there should be voices, birdsong, the hush of careful footsteps on floorboards, the feeling of a loved one clasping his hand in their own? Nothing. Even with his eyes shut he knows he's utterly solitary here, wherever here is. A strange damp hospital where the police could've dragged him to, or maybe just lying the empty shell of the house that crumbled beneath his feet. He feels his stomach rise and then ache with the expansion but he can't hear his own intake of breath through gritted teeth as he tries to relax his abdomen.

Is this it?

Hannibal would be on the other side of Italy by now, meeting pushed back and safe in hiding. Without him. The mission's over, he supposes, an invalid agent estranged from his own target- he didn't know whether MI6 would even bother recalling him. It certainly seems they hadn't done anything after the attempt. Would they bother? Hannibal wouldn't. MI6 isn't the mafia but it sure is run like one sometimes.

He feels like laughing, or crying, or both at the same time. Forsaken by even his enemies, ironic. For once in his goddamn life he'd rather not be alone. At least your enemies can't betray you, only your friends. He'd spent so long next to Hannibal night after day after night in his suit or in his bed, the warm presence only ever a few feet away, watching. After this, what possible purpose could he serve? He was nothing to MI6, nothing to Hannibal, both of them distant memories in the grey and nothing he could do would change that.

Will doesn't realise he's crying till he tastes the salt on his lips.

He'd do anything, anything, to have someone by his side.

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He feels cold.

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Hannibal observes the minute expansion of Matthew's chest with each breath. There's long tubes running into his upper arms that Hannibal inserted himself, dosing him up on a cocktail of morphine infused pain killers. He can't yet tell whether he will regain consciousness considering the nature of the injury. The brain surgeon stands on the other side of the him, making intricate slices in the scraped crater that carved up Matthew's cranium. Hannibal supervises the entire time in his own scrubs, deadly eye fixed on the surgery, scalpel steady in his palm.

They spend hours there trying to reconstruct Matthew's skull where it cracked in two places until he's wearing his blood like gloves and a caterpillar of red stitches sits on the side of Matthew's head.

The surgeon is dismissed and Hannibal stands alone with Matthew's body still outstretched on the table. He's transported back two days when he stood over him like this but Matthew was safe and he could protect him. Hannibal takes a seat in the corner and waits.

Chapter End Notes

Am I too cruel to Will? Probably. Will that make me stop? Probably not!

Chapter 5

He's dragged out of his sleep kicking and screaming. Will's body fights against it all it can but there's nothing he can do until his eyes flick back, fully open and round with fear to see the silhouette above him. He groans nonsensically and is hushed; warm hands grip his own.

"Good morning,"

He grunts with pain and exhaustion. Just let him go back to sleep, to that wondrous slumber in limbo. No matter what he does, it feels like the worst pain he's ever experienced.

He hears the scratch of a turning knob and whilst it doesn't do much for his throbbing head the rest of his body slowly eases. He sighs back into the mattress. Will is all too familiar with the numbness in his arm to have to look down to know he's most likely hooked up to a morphine bag, maybe mixed with some actual medicine too if he's lucky.

The figure slowly phases in and out of focus.

"Hnnn,"

"I'm here, I'm here,"

There's a quiet moment where Will lets out a shaky breath of relief. He wants to hold Hannibal's hand over his heart, wants the warmth of human touch anywhere on his body in this cold room. Everything that surrounds him is basked in the dim of a cold filament light in the middle of a room that is far too big for the small bulb that hangs at the centre.

He tries to speak again but it's just slurred vowels like a baby's bawling. Will's eyes prick with tears.

"You have sustained two head injuries, broken ribs, multiple wounds to your lower limbs and scarring across your chest and back. Do not try and move." Dr Lecter's clinical voice fills the empty space between them. Will can feel his injuries as he speaks and all he wants to do is sleep. He lets his eyes flit shut again and tries to clear his mind of everything.

It's only when he wakes up for the second time does he realise he was still holding Hannibal's hand as he went to sleep.

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Everything's so much louder the second time, the world whining into his ringing ears as he gasps for breath but god is it so much better to be awake now. The sheet beneath him is sticky with sweat so that even if he could move he feels as though he'd be stuck down to the mattress. He tests just in case- raising his forearm an inch off the bed. His hand is immediately enclosed by a rough palm.

"Be careful, don't overstrain yourself just yet." Will hears Lecter's voice comforting him. Strangely it works, Will knows Hannibal at least knows what he's doing.

"Doctor, Dr Lecter," he breathes through his dry cracked throat. Hannibal lets him shake his hand off his arm. "How long, Hannibal?" He looks deploring into Lecter's brown eyes, "How long was I asleep?"

"Two weeks," Will groans again. He's almost embarrassed enough that the last of his pain is inconsequential.

"And the meeting?"

"Scheduled today." The answer comes back clipped. The atmosphere changes.

"You, you're still going, right?"

"I have better things to do."

The thought distresses him. Seriously? After all Will's sacrifice and the man isn't even going to go in the fucking first place. "What do you mean? You have to go to that meeting, at least send a representative?" He searches in the darkness of his mind for a solution.

"I think we both know it was a fix Mr Brown." That name feels like an ice-pick in his chest and a rope around his hands slowly pulling tighter.

"Our intel clearly said otherwise, it's been in the planning for years," He grits out slowly, taking pauses where he can't seem to speak at all. A bead of sweat dripped down Will's forehead, far too noticeable in a cold room. His breath hitched in all the wrong places making his chest twinge with each intake. Everything beyond Dr Lecter's face becomes a blur as his eyes hyper-focus.

"Our intel? My personal informants were quite adamant I might meet the specific people I'd rather not run into," His voice was overtaken by a sleek undertone like the metal of a pistol, hard and unforgiving. Hannibal's eyes matched, full of nothing but the dark hollow before a hit. His suit pressed into such perfect smoothness the line of a gun behind his jacket threatened him with each glance.

Will could no longer breath. The walls creek around him like a cage. He can sense his surroundings bend inwards. His hands shook with his fear, there was nothing but dread in his heart, his limbs felt hollow and weak, mind working over drive to realise he was pinned with rope to the bed, no way out, no escape, no open arms to run back to, nothing he was nothing, he could do nothing, he is about to be nothing, he is going to die, this is it, this time, this is everything and he is nothing.

“Tell me 007-”

The ceiling collapses before he gets the words out.

“Open fire.”

The door bursts open- he hears the stuttering of gunshots before the dust can clear, they surround them and with each second progress closer and closer. There footsteps seem even louder to him. Will knows they’ll reach him. He has seconds left and right next to him, Hannibal does too. Will would prefer only one body today.

The bodies in combat gear shout to each other over blasting of the fire of semi-automatics. Slowly they advance further into the room in formation. They look like a swarm of beasts and they roar as one. They are one machine in all black and headgear that render them anonymous and expendable. Their headlamps burn deeply through the haze to the back of the room. The bed is there. They come faster. The goal is in sight. Step after step. The thundering is close enough to rattle heads. They loom like death until one final charge, a blitz of gunshots centred on his bed. They tear the sheet off with the gun already pointing to his head.

Or at least where his head should be.

Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

There was a second door. There's always a fucking second door with Lecter, and he was dragged right through it by his arms. He can still feel the twinging soreness of where the IV was ripped away and his body is slowly coming back from the dull numb of sweet morphine. His feet stumble and stagger beneath him like they're not really his but all the same he tries to assert himself forward without the help of strong arms around him.

They lurch their way to the stairwell, Will almost tumbling haphazardly over Hannibal as he trips on a step down and falls onto his broad shoulders, grasping onto the seams of his suit to stop himself flying any further. He only then notices the smearing of blood he's left over Hannibal and clenches his jaw at the sight, but steels himself and hobbles down the stairs after Hannibal as fast as he can manage. He's unsteady on his feet but that helps him go faster as long as he doesn't topple head first and break his neck. The unforgiving white stairs spiral further downwards until it feels like they'll never stop. Everything hurts, yet he can't let himself be more than few steps behind Lecter, whether that's personal pride, commitment to his role or something else….

They hear the door to the stairs burst open at the top and Hannibal slows only for a moment so that he and Will are shoulder to shoulder as heavy footsteps plunder down the stairs like rain on a tin roof. He grabs Will to his side and he lets out a hiss of breath at the pain but says no more as they support each other downwards. Fear spikes in Will's heartbeat as he hears them draw ever closer. There's no way the two of them can make it far enough, let alone out an exit before they're trampled into splatters on the shining floor. He's having trouble breathing and can feel the cramp seize up his ribcage. He looks to Hannibal whose forehead is beaded with sweat and grime and opens his mouth to stutter out surrender when he instead is heaved upwards and hoisted into a fireman's lift by Hannibal's straining arms. One hand is clamped onto his damp shirt whilst he picks up the pace and begins to run ever faster down the stairs. The soldiers above them start to choke out more bullets from their guns, echoing around the walls so it feels like a thousand of them behind. Will lets his arms drop and tries to stay as still as possible, wrapped around Lecter's body like a child. He feels the expansion of his chest and knows that Hannibal has got to collapse too at some point.

They make it to the last spiral of white before he can, burst out of the maintenance door with renewed vigour. The first thing Will notices as he looks back is how disturbingly it passes for an office block, or maybe that's all the building ever was all along, bar his own one desolate room. He doesn't know where they'll go from here, let alone where here is, but Hannibal is already taking off with Will still draped across him, down a winding road that looks far too narrow for more than one person wide. The uneven cobbles make for hard work beneath them, threatening to snap heels as they make their escape. The world outside is almost just as noisy, he can hear the market only a few streets away and the shouts of children and sellers

just trying to make it through the day. But all of these things are whispers in the roar of the helicopter that flies over their heads. In that moment Hannibal stops. They both well and truly know their fate.

They meet it as they turn the next corner into a wider modern street, Hannibal walking slow like he's the one prowling, but it's for nothing. Will can't see what faces them but he can sure as hell see the black swarm of the soldiers finally trickling behind them in a flurried stream of firepower until they're surrounded. Caught. With his ass high in the air and blood seeping through his thin clothes. The adrenaline makes him nauseous.

"Dr Hannibal Lecter."

How Will loathed that familiar voice.

"You are under arrest."

"And, pray tell, for what?" Comes his retort.

"For numerous offences against the Italian, Polish, Czech and Lithuanian governments to name a few, for actions such as, but not limited to, bribery, corruption, extortion, the supplying of Class A and B drugs, trafficking, drug running, tax evasion, obstruction of justice and how could we forget: murder.

"There is no evidence for such claims." His voice is steady even if Will can feel how his arms still strain slightly under his weight.

"We have plenty of time to discuss this in court. If you could be so kind as to release your prisoner then you at least have one good thing to say for yourself."

Hannibal takes a short breath as he lowers Will to the ground, cradling his head against the concrete. He sees for the first time the circle of guns trained on Lecter, held by more high vis jackets than you can count with either the words Interpol or Polizia or SIS in large black letters across them. The helicopter still slowly glides above.

Will is handled to his feet and dragged back behind the line of agents before he can move to stand.

"My prisoner? What makes you say that?"

"Will Graham is ours and we would not have rescued him unless his cover had been compromised. You who pose a danger to him."

"Oh, your special agent." Hannibal looks straight at Will as he spits the words and he wants to turn his head with shame because right now Will can't bear the burning rawness in

Hannibal's face.

"We will take you into custody now Dr Lecter, while one of our other operatives reads you your rights." There's a jostle of movement as five hulking masses of men approach with handcuffs and enclose Lecter. He doesn't struggle as they cuff him, doesn't even change expression. But as he's led into the steel back of a van his mouth curls up into a smile minutely. There's a pain in Will's heart as he watches the man who took him as a bookkeeper and ended up sharing his bed and half of his empire, the one who brought him back from death not once but twice, and the one who carried him, wounds and all, away from an ugly death even if it meant condemning himself in the process. Will would do it all again in a heartbeat for him. But not for MI6.

"Well done 007," he doesn't bother to turn around to the voice, he can't stop staring at his last few moments with Hannibal. The van starts up with a jutter and is escorted slowly with a flurry of police cars encircling it. Will watches until the moment it turns the corner out of sight and finally, is lifted from the concrete into a sterile ambulance.

"Will?"

He snaps his head back.

"Dr Bloom."

"You did very well today after everything, I will give M my praises."

"Jack won't care."

"But the rest of MI6 does."

He pauses.

"How did you know? You could have brought me out at any point why did you decide to now?"

"We assessed Dr Lecter wouldn't turn up to the meeting and made plans accordingly. We needed you in there as long as possible for intel and hopefully to get you out in a skirmish undetected." Her voice is put forward with false calm as though she's trying to project it onto him.

"But how? No one could have known what he was planning, I know that more than anyone- he's only ever shared plans with people he's known for years longer than I've ever even been at MI6."

"We had adequate intelligence." Dr Bloom's lips are tight and speaks with a clipped harshness he's rarely heard her use. He presses on more, burning to know.

"What do you mean by that Alana?"

Her eyes flare at her first name and the twist in her expression shows her unease. "MI6 hears everything."

He squints back at her trying to decipher her words, sifting through memories until-

“The tracker.” He bolts up, wounds be damned. “It wasn’t just a location tracker, was it?” She begins to stutter out a half-formed denial but he’s already cut her off “You listened to everything? Hell, recorded it!”

“We did what we felt was professionally in the best interest of the nation and-”

“You knew exactly what I was doing and exactly what I was dragged through and only now when I am useless do you finally decide to end the pain you’ve ordered me through! You violated every code in the book! Does Jack know? Fuck of course he does! You two probably had it set up from the start- both of you!”

“Will, this was a hard call and only when faced with the national threat of terrorism off the scale. The Will I knew would see that, surely you understand?”

“Was it you who let the bombs off too?” His words cut sharply into hers. “Was it?”

“It was a senior decision, far above my level, I-”

“You killed hundreds! Innocent people left dead in the street or grieving for the ones that were because you couldn’t be bothered to fucking wait for the damn meeting. You knew that I could die and you still set it off even though if it didn’t work and you killed me you’d have nothing but firepower to go on instead of intel and stealth. You even knew my exact location in that building and still every single explosion went perfectly to your plan, didn’t it? Apart from you didn’t get Hannibal dead, instead you got me off the map for weeks and knowingly. Then you stormed the room I was in shooting at both of us- not him, not your beloved target but both of us.” He’s standing an inch away from her face, staring directly into her eyes with nothing but disgust in his and both hand clenched into the fabric of her collar, the paramedics long since scuttled away. “Why.”

“You were a danger to yourself and to this mission.”

“Fuck you.” Will spits at her.

“You know what’s a bigger fucking danger Alana? YOU! You trying to kill me was a bigger danger to me than anything I’ve had on this mission! Twice! Was once not bloody enough for you?” He’s shouting at her, his grip shaking, “You never briefed me on plan A- my death was plan A and everything down to Z! I’m only here because of Hannibal! And he’s gone too along with any hopes of protection I had, so why don’t you just kill me now you heartless bootlicker, you complete and utter bitch?” His voice is raspy as he whispers his final sentence. Tears stream from his eyes, there’s snot and dribble and blood and sweat everywhere and he knows he looks insane, he feels insane. He shakes her harder. “Kill me now or I swear to god I’ll kill you first.”

“Listen to me Will, you’ve been too deep too long and taken on characteristics that aren’t you. This is not how you feel, it’s okay-”

“It’s not, is it? It never will be.”

“Will, stop, you’re just making yourself more upset.” She tries to calm him like a mother to a baby. He feels belittled and humiliated and he just wants to fucking scream.

He hears guns begin to rattle again in the distance but he pays them no attention when Dr Bloom still lords over him like there’s nothing wrong.

“You’re a maniac.” He mutters. “Give Jack my notice.” He steps around Alana, knocking his shoulder into hers but she grabs him before he can move further.

“That’s not protocol.”

“Well neither’s trying to kill your own agent, but I guess there’s a first time for everything.” The guns in the distance seem to be getting louder. What is that racket about?

“We can’t let you go Will, not like this. Look- your stitches are torn and you won’t make it to the nearest hospital without proper treatment!”

Will shakes his head. He can feel the tears welling up at the bottom of his eyes. If they’re from sadness, anger, or pure frustration he can’t tell. “I had proper treatment. You were the ones who came and took that away from me.” He stares ahead, not bearing to look at her treacherous face. Instead he focuses on the stream police traffic in front of them. Sirens still fill the air. The area’s been cordoned off by officers whilst white faced witnesses give their accounts. The whole area smells of blood and sweat and of the sewer drain nearby sweltering in the heat. The air is too oppressive and every breath seems to drown him. “Please leave.”

It’s the sudden politeness that makes Alana suddenly step back, wary the tipping point may be about to arrive. “I’ll see you back in London.” She nods swiftly, eyes downcast and ashamed.

Will huffs a sigh of relief when he sees her stride into the distant crowd of officers, just another blurry face. God he’s so alone. He wants to bury himself all at once under the covers of his childhood bed that had itched but Will had been too grateful to complain. Instead he’d spent countless nights under silk and brushed cotton, deep in sleep with only the tickle of another man’s breath behind him to complain about. He didn’t complain then and he certainly won’t start now, he decides, flopping back on the stretcher beneath him. He reaches to a first aid pack with an outstretched hand and clumsily pulls it down from a small shelf above him.

He takes seven attempts to thread the needle. After all he’s been through Will barely flinches at the sting of disinfectant as he wipes the wounds on his leg clean again, the most severe of which is a gash cut into the outside of his thigh. He grits his teeth as he reinforces the stitches that have been pulled open from their sudden escape. He gulps down the bottle of water found in the kit before starting on the next leg; the smaller pricking cuts cover him like wayward confetti.

There’s shouts outside again, louder this time. He can’t seem to catch a damn break to even stitch himself up before something interrupts. Will rolls his eyes at the thought. The rumble of noise that had been brewing since his outburst with Alana was playing on his nerves. He

leant up, slowly closing one of the doors to the back of the ambulance he lay in. There, now if they want another punch up at least he won't be shot directly in the head. However, at this point Will's pretty sure he could survive anything bar a nuclear explosion.

He lies his head back onto the thin mattress below and waits.

The echoes of gunshots only grow louder. What could possibly be going on now?

Will steels himself as he hears the screech of tyres on tarmac, the smell of burning permeating through the air like a looming warning. The screams of civilians join the screeching. Shouts for back up, for cover, for anything, are ordered into the tightly gripped phones of policemen. Engines of SUVs roar into action, shooting down the street with force.

Minutes tick by. The sounds never cease.

One by one, the screams are suppressed, eliminated. Will tries to quiet his own breathing in response but it only makes his heart beat faster and breath shakier.

The engine around him suddenly rumbles to life. He presses himself up against the door and grabs whatever he can find, right now a metal fire extinguisher, ready to hurl at any attacker. He waits.

The ambulance jerks, pushing forward away from the scene. Will's eyes widen. Whoever they are, they either don't know he's here or think he's already dead. He clutches the extinguisher to his chest. He hears the shouts from the driver's seat. It's something in an eastern language, something triumphant.

They drive slowly from the scene, the rattle of guns now few and far between. The other door to the ambulance swings wildly from side to side as they move. Will can't bring himself to risk closing it and give away his position. He reaches out his hand again, ready to catch it as inconspicuously as possible on its next swing.

The door behind him swings open instead.

For a moment Will falls.

He can’t believe it.

He made it this far to die being flung from the back of a shoddy ambulance. The world around him is quiet but his mind is so loud.

He’s powerless.

Panic. Desperation. Fear. Fear like he’s never felt in his life. Fear that freezes his throat and his lungs. Fear, driving him to keep reaching, keep stretching into the abyss. Fear of death and of failure, too great to do anything but hope.

His hand catches around the bar of the second door.

Chapter End Notes

Longest chapter in the story (sorry about that!), how did you guys find it?? I really hope you enjoyed it!

Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The force of it punches into him like a physical blow. Will's chest heaves rapidly. Air suddenly filling his lungs again. The cold steel around his hand is unforgiving but Will has never felt stronger and grips it with all the strength he can muster. His legs dangle dangerously above the tarmac whizzing below his feet.
"William!"
Will twists towards the shout.

It can't be-

but it is.

Hannibal, his Hannibal, is running just a few metres behind. Will gasps at the sight. He must look wild, hanging on to the back of an ambulance by one hand, blood smeared across his body like paint on a toddler's wall. But Hannibal has never looked as wonderful to Will. There's streaks of dust and coppery blood in his hair, scars running down his powerful forearms that propel him forward, closing the gap between him and Will. In just his plain white shirt and black trousers, he's the most intimidating sight Will has ever seen but his heart swells with delight.
They make to swing around a corner and Hannibal lunges at the vehicle before it can accelerate. He snatches onto the door with both hands, fingers like talons. It's barely a moment before Hannibal uses his momentum to fling him forward again. He lands heavily on his hands and knees on the floor of the ambulance.
"Hannibal," Will croaks out. Fuck. He doesn't know why he was pleased to see him, he could be here to finally kill him. The cat's out of the bag now and there's no room for spies in a mafia gang, Hannibal knows his real name. But for just one moment, his heart had hoped.

"William." Hannibal gets up to his feet and stands above him. He looks like a mountain, thinks Will, strong and unforgiving.

"I'm sorry."

It's odd to say but Will can't help himself. He is sorry, for everything. For all the deceit when Hannibal had personally helped Will into his life, for every lie he told whilst looking Hannibal dead in the eyes and was then fed peaches by Hannibal's fingers. Sorry for every night he was unfaithful, holding MI6 in his heart instead of him, for every moment he doubted or denied.

"I'm sorry." It comes like a sob.
Hannibal falls to his knees in front of Will so that they're at the same height.

"I know." He smooths Will's curls, sticky with sweat, away from his forehead and out of his eyes. "I know Will."

His arms hook around Will as he heaves him into the ambulance with him. They collapse together and lie motionless in each other's arms. He sobs into the crook of Hannibal's neck. Low, choking sobs erupt from him and Will doesn't have the strength to stop them. Hannibal's arms come tighten around him, embracing him. He feels his hands stroke loving circles on his back.

Hannibal moves them backwards, sliding to the far wall of the ambulance so that they can see the view of the Italian hills pass by from the open doors and he sits up slowly, allowing Will to curl into his chest, tears not letting up for a moment.
"It's okay Will." Hannibal's arms are still tight around him, one hand stroking at his cheek and fixing his tangled hair. Will looks up at him, sitting closer so that their foreheads touch.

"What did you know?" He can barely get the words out before he's racked with sobs again. Hannibal gives him a small smile. "I knew everything Will. I knew your name, your age, your job, your likes and dislikes, your hobbies, all before I even met you. Can't have plain old anyone snooping around- I do the checks personally."
"But then how-" His disbelief must show in his face.
"You interested me. I couldn't even call you by your name but I could live with that as long as I could keep you in my company." He pauses to let Will take it all in. "At first, I just wanted to see how far you would go. Even managed to get you into my bed, although I wasn't going to do anything of that nature without explicit consent, I draw the line there. But I cherish your company Will."
"How are you even here?" Will shakes his head.
"The police van- you didn't think I was going to let myself be driven away so helplessly? I had a few friends in position just in case, surprisingly useful. Who do you think is driving us right now?"

Hannibal can feel the tension seeping out of Will as he realises they're both safe now. "You never ceased to amaze me Will. However sceptical I was, your advice was always direct and practical, your protection even more so."
"I- I think we can call it even on the protection matter." Will manages to get out. Hannibal's smile widens at that. Will is still clinging on to the fabric of Hannibal's shirt, too afraid to let go.
"I don't know, I plan on you protecting me for many more years to come. Who knows what will happen then?"
It seems too good to be true, Will fears he's dreaming. Maybe he really did die on the dusty tarmac but then he would have gone to hell and this, this is most certainly heaven.
"Then we protect each other."

Will presses their lips together. It is a true, proper kiss where neither had to pretend.

They stay like that, entangled and kissing, until they fall asleep, the scenic view still open before them, on the long road to home.

Chapter End Notes

That's a wrap!

I was so tempted to end this badly but as much as my inner demons wanted me to I guess my conscious came out top this time- sorry anyone who was expecting/wanted differently- maybe I'll write an alternative ending a different time! This was super fun to write, I'd quite like to come back to it again!

Please let me know if you enjoyed! Best bits/worst bits/random moments- all feedback is greatly appreciated!

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!